"Bullshit!" Analysis of alt/rad-movements

Central questions

keywords: behavioral analysis; signal theory; linguistics; political movements; social movements

- Questions:
    - What are the common traits shared between current alt/rad-movements?
    - Can we create a nuanced, generalizable model to describe formation of these groups?
    - Can we create a set of models to document processes and sub-processes within these groups?
    - Can we then tie these micro models into a larger macro model?

What I have so far

Really. . . what are these groups?

- They exist on the margins of the greater discourse
- Chief objective: insert their lesser discourse into the greater discourse
- Analogy: Stone Soup with unknown variables "Is it poison?"
- Some ideas are poison; without true tests, nearly impossible to tell

Greater and lesser discourse

- What is discourse
    - From Foucault: . . . (to add later)
    - How we define the subjective cultural reality: norms, mores, ethics, traditions, worldview
    - Example: View of homosexuality since 1960's to now
- Greater Discourse
    - How the average population views things
    - "Universal" to how the meta-group sees itself and the world around it
- Lesser Discourse
    - held by groups that are partially excluded from the Greater Discourse
    - divergent groups that vie to include their ideas in the "Stone Soup"
    - Competition against both the Greater Discourse and the other groups
    - ex: Alt-right/fascists; Rad-left/(numerous leftist ideologies; Stalinism, anarchism, and socialism at forefront)

- Commonalities between both:
    - potential for splitting, creation of factions within either discourse

- factionalism creates competition for control of the discourse
- also occurs when a Lesser Discourse enters the pool of the Greater Discourse
- realization that both will subsume smaller groups (in numbers and ideology) in order to add a measure of variety

Violence and its place in the alt/rad movements

-(Pull some thought wrt/ Islam view of Jihad)

- Define the types of violence
    - physical: harm done to persons or property
    - social: ostracization, rumors, smear campaigns, etc. used to lower a person's status
    - cyber: attacks that will remove a person's platform for speech: DDoS, pressure or attacks against the hosting provider
- Threat of violence used to enforce conformity among members
    - Implicit threat through actions taken against dissenters and outsiders
    - the threats help quiet insiders that would otherwise raise probing questions/express criticism of movement
- Against outsiders
    - violence against outsiders can be both helpful and harmful
    - helps: protection, backs-up some soft-power, attraction of a certain kind of recruit: protection, outlet for anger/resentment towards opposition
    - harms: can damage public image, soft power can be seen as a short precursor to hard power, alienation of moderate|pacifist supporter

Myths within the discourses

- Stories of oppression
    - (mis-)appropriation of these stories acts as a tool to both form the ideology and create propoganda for recruitment
    - generally focused on (various types of) minority groups/causes
    - "savior complex" fuels the movements; ex: Laura Bush 2001 Weekly Address re: Afghan Women
    - next-generation of imperialist/orientalist thought applied on a more micro level?
- "Liberation theology" as a non-religious tool
    - "veneration" of past thinkers/writers/scholars
    - A form of reactionary politics?
        * Dream of completing the work of these thinkers
            · Examples: Marx's workers' utopia; Hitler's Reich; Klan objectives

The results of these myths

1. Damaging to current society

   - Censorship of differing viewpoints
     - Kills opportunity for organic change
     - Squelching progress and creates stagnation and repression
       * Stagnation and repression will create restive and reactive groups
   - Behavior that does not contribute to civil society
     - *"Degeneracy"* and risks towards protected classes
       * Paedophilia and predation of "barely legal" youths
       * Open lechery, and innapropriate public displays
     - Subjugation of women
       * treatment of them as property
       * correctional rape
     - Racial politicking
       * equality of opportunity != equality of results
       * supremacy|subjugation of race(s) and racial preference

2. Beneficial to current society

   - Adoption of certain reactionary politics
     - national pride != blind patriotism
     - recognition of the family unit as a necessity
     - optimism: ability to make the world a better place
   - A more nuanced feminism
     - recognition that the choice and agency of women belongs to them
     - framework to show that feminism is expressed in cultural contexts
   - Decentralization of key services
     - monopoly-busting to enable competition
     - allows for more innovation, allows for advancements
     - variety of services (http; ssh; file services)